23-0. There are four road games and three tough home contests left on the regular season schedule, and then the conference tournament follows. Surely Thad Matta's Buckeyes are going to drop a game or two. Aren't they?

Thursday's tight win over Michigan (3-7) proved that even a sub-500 conference opponent can put a scare into No. 1, if the favorites come out flat. Once again though, the opponent had no answer for Jared Sullinger in crunch time, and the second fastest start ever for Ohio State continued with a 62-53 win over the Wolverines. But projecting 34-0? Nah. Can't happen.

For the 2010-2011 Buckeyes, key players have bad games and these guys still win. They count on freshmen to play important roles, and somehow get by. And they have a guy who can just flat take over in the late going. But still, it's just a matter of *when* they'll drop one, not *if* they're going to. Right?

Going undefeated into February is so rare in the modern era that it's not even something you really want to see happen as a fan. OSU is just the fourth team in the last eight years to be unbeaten this late in the season, and it has been 20 years since a team went into the NCAA Tournament with a perfect record, (UNLV, 1991). Besides, they play in Madison next Saturday, and Thad Matta has *never* won there . You'll recall it hasn't been a good year for unbeaten OSU teams traveling to Wisconsin.

If they survive that test, the Bucks could just as easily get knocked off at Purdue on the 20th, or in State College on the 1st of March. How long can the Buckeyes' loss total match Sully's

uniform number? The pressure of that big fat zero will build with every game. Players tighten up. Officials get caught up in upset fever. An undefeated regular season is so improbable... it's almost unthinkable.

So if it's unthinkable, why does it seem like right now the odds of it happening are about 50-50? This bunch doesn't rattle easily. They should be favored in every game. The Big Ten isn't as strong as people thought it was going to be. In other words...it's thinkable.

In my more lucid moments, I don't foresee a perfect regular season, so the only reason I'm writing on the topic of the unbeaten Buckeyes is that, for the moment, I can. *Carpe Diem*, and pass the popcorn.

As for winning it all, the oddsmakers still like Duke (3-1) better than OSU (5-1) to take home the trophy. For followers of the team, it's enough to have the luxury of musing about this in the first week of February. For local sports fans, the Buckeyes are an oasis in the desert. Excuse us for now, while we drink this in.
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There are a couple of nice profiles of Sullinger online in the last few days. ESPN's Dana O'Neill tracks the family basketball legacy for the Sullingers, and Jason King of Yahoo Sports has a flattering portrait of the big freshman. (No tats for Sully). Both are worth a look.

Here's video of Sully's blind half-court shot from the other day in shoot-around.

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Recruiting Afterthoughts

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